People Who Ought to be Shot, page 2078.

Modern Life

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A LENTEN LILY.

Modern Life

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ROYAL AND SOCIETY NEWS.

Exclusive to "Modern Life."

More Kings and More Trouble.

What will be the end of this colossal war? At present it is a potential five years' war about the neutrality of Belgium. (That is, of course, so far as Britain is concerned. In the rest of Europe it is the war of the survival of Servia.) But what will be the end? Another war, German's War of Revenge upon Britain? Or a War of the Polish Succession? Or a War of the Belgian Succession? Either is well within the bounds of probability. Only a few weeks ago I told the story of how old Emperor Francis-Joseph's grandson-in-law, Otto von Windisch-Graetz, had been selected to be the new King in Belgium under the suzerainty of the German Empire. Now, according to the *Morning Post*, the new King of Poland is to be the Archduke Stephan of Austria. From which it is obvious as daylight that trouble is being laid up in store for Europe when the present titanic struggle is over.

* * *

Austria Steals a March on Russia.

At the very beginning of the war the Tsar promised the Poles their autonomy if they stood by Russia, whom they hate just as much as they do the Austrians, and a lot more. But the Russians have had no luck in Poland. They cannot even keep what they had. Half the west of Poland is in German hands. All the Russians have secured is the marshy district known as Galicia, which was Austria's bit when poor old Poland was post-mortemed. However, by the aid of the Germans the Austrians have got the ancient Polish capital, Cracow, all right, and, beneath its terrific fortifications, it will probably stand a siege of three years before it is reduced by the Russians. It is victualled for three years, anyway, and the Russians have not yet begun its investment. So it is here that Archduke Stephan is to be crowned King of Poland, and that's what you might call stealing a march on Russia. The question is, How will it all end?

* * *

Seven Years' War all about a Woman.

Nearly all the wars in Europe have been caused by questions of the succession to Royal thrones. Austria has always been the nation to rush into arms over the matter of a dynasty. The Seven Years' War was a war of the Austrian succession. Emperor Carl IV., having no sons, desired to pop one of his daughters into his shoes, and decreed this under the Pragmatic Sanction of 1724. That being Carl's own affair, all was peace till he died, but, on the Q.T., every nation in Europe sharpened its sword. When Carl died he left his daughter on the throne, and an uneasy head with it. She would have been much happier in a little grey home in the west, poor dear, than she ever was in the Palace in the Ballplatz in Vienna.

Kings on the Make.

For no sooner was she crowned than the Elector of Bavaria jumped up with a proposal that she hand him over Bohemia, of which he claimed to be heir, or come out and fight. Marie Therese went out. The Elector of Saxony, who was also King of Poland, and the King of Spain both bobbed up with a claim to the whole Austrian Empire, they being the nearest male Hapsburgs whom the Pragmatic Sanction had done out of their rights. The King of Sardinia put his spoke in on account of the Duchy of Milan, while Frederick the Great of Prussia, never missing a chance of some fun, held up his hand about Silesia, and before you could say Jack Robinson all Europe was in the field!

* * *

Prussia, as Usual, Has To Butt In.

Of course, France had to come in somewhere! France has always been one of those touchy people who see an insult in every glance and a sneer in every smile. So she butted in on the side of the two Electors, and thus began the Seven Years' War, in which nobody got any kudos but Frederick of Prussia, whose army was in a more wonderful state of preparation and precision than the army of Kaiser Wilhelm to-day.

* * *

Britain Always Better Off Under a Woman.

Little Marie Therese fought like a lioness for her cubs, and I am very glad to say the only nation in Europe that would not and could not be bribed or cajoled to take part in the general squabble was Great Britain. Also, she was the only first-class nation whose sympathies were with Marie Therese of Austria. Which was owing, perhaps, to our having nothing to do with Salic Laws in this country, which has been proved a God-send, for Britain has generally been better off under a woman sovereign than under a man! And I am no Suffragette, mind.

* * *

What We May Come To.

So where we shall be in five years time God only knows. I don't mind predicting that we shall be a devil of a sight worse off than Germany at the end of that five years! Nobody in Britain—not a soul—realises that the war is costing us many times more than it will cost Germany when the belligerents have settled down to a regular siege of the Germanic Empires. And by the time it is over I predict that every woman in Britain will have to send the wedding-ring off her finger to the bank in order to keep us in gold.

But perhaps I am an old pessimist. Unluckily for me, however, I have surveyed all the possibilities of a war with Germany on German soil, and amidst terrain bristling with guns and fortifications, and so, you see, I know a bit about it. I wish I didn't. I should be much happier. This war against the German Empire is one where ignorance is bliss.

* * *

Lord Monkswell's Hard Luck.

So I will switch on to something nicer. We will have a complete change—a quick change. What shall I write about to ease my gloom. I know. Babies! Lord Monkswell's baby, say. Poor old boy, it's hard luck to be in the trenches (Oh, hang the war!) while your wife lies dying in London with her only child at her breast, and you can't stir a peg or do a hand's turn to help her. But that has been Lord Monkswell's experience just lately. He is a gallant lad, Monkswell, and his father was a great figure in the land for years. Now he's gone, his son is doing his bit just as the hope of an heir to the peerage was on the way. Now the heir is left, and the poor young mother taken!

* * *

Another Chancery Lawyer who was Secretary.

Lord Monkswell's late father was Under-Secretary for War in Mr. Gladstone's last administration. But his great life's work was under the new County Council for London in 1889. And there no one did finer work than he. But he was one of those typical Chancery lawyers who, in this fat-headed country, generally *are*

made War Ministers, when their hearts are completely centred upon some crackpot scheme for altering the education of the children in the Church and State schools. Thank God, we weren't involved in a European war in Lord Monkswell's time in the War Ministry. But his son's all right, and though the child proved to be a girl, it is alive and well, and, we trust, will live to comfort Lord Monkswell's bereaved heart for many years to come.

* * *

Is the Law an *Absolute* Ass?

Yes, it is, if you judge it by the summing-up of Mr. Justice Lush in the Welsh breach-of-promise case! Under the first judgment the plaintiff, Miss Minnie Quirk, a charming, vivacious, and tender-hearted woman, recovered the sum of £350 damages in respect of a milliner's business which she had given up in view of the promise to marry her made by the man she loved. As he had died before he carried out the promise, she was unable to sue for damages for breach of that promise, although she admitted that it was under the promise of marriage that the "late-lamented" took her down to Teignmouth and there seduced her. The fellow was a wealthy South Wales coal-mine proprietor, and he could have made her both happy and rich.

* * *

A Most Virtuous-minded Judge.

But, as he died, she was unable (under the law) to recover anything. On account of her suffering the loss of her business, however, a plain, common-sense British jury awarded her £350. But one of those virtuous-minded judges who sit on the benches in the big building in the Strand determined to upset this award, and he did it in the most painstaking fashion. This was the Hon. Sir Charles Lush, Justice of His Majesty's Court of King's Bench, whose own career is summed up in *Who's Who* in three lines!

"Swaddled in Parchment, Laced up with Red Tape!"

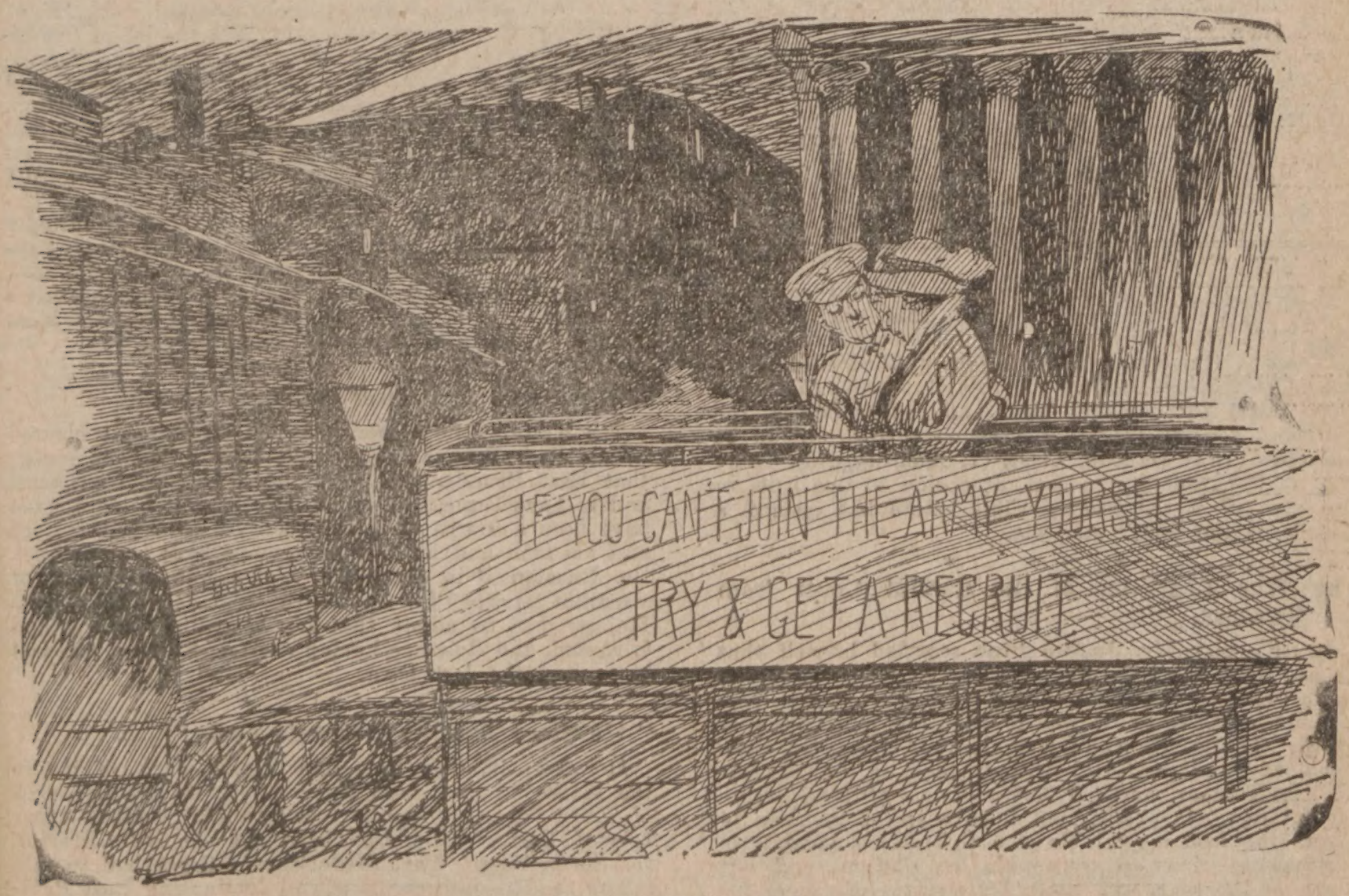
Mr. Justice Lush is a remarkable type of that particular kind of lawyer whom I illustrated in these columns some time ago in the personality of Mr. Justice Coleridge. Lush, J., is of precisely the same type of personality. Born in the law (his father was the late Lord Justice of Appeal, Sir Robert Lush), from his cradle Sir Charles Lush was swaddled in parchment laced up with red tape. From his earliest moments he learned how to eliminate human sentiment and human feeling from the studied chicaneries of the law. Precedent, Prerogative and Possession may be said to be the three leading words in his vocabulary. There is no man in Britain who sleeps so well after upsetting a judgment into which the human element has entered as Sir Charles Lush. To have shown, in a verbose and tedious legal rigmarole that, according to the authorities, the suffering victim of an "act of God" or of a man's premature death is not entitled to recover anything from the deceased's estate is just the sort of legal achievement which would fill the skinny heart of Mr. Justice Lush with ecstasy. And the Quirk case provided him with a glorious opportunity of showing that human sympathy and common-sense have no affinities with "The Law"!

* * *

"Torts, Trovers, and Tort-Feasors."

For sheer wearisome verbosity the 2,500-word judgment in this case has no parallel in my recollection of the courts. It gave Mr. Justice Lush just that opportunity of airing his grandiose doctrinairism that he loves better than anything in the world. Here is an example of the Lushian style (running through scores of folios, mind):

"As regards all actions essentially based on tort, said Lord Justice Bowen in Phillips v. Homfray (*supra*),



LONDON BY NIGHT.

It's an ill wind——.

BRITONS IN PARIS.

"Mon Jamie, A'm awfu' thirsty. Let's ask where we can get a drink!"
"Right, Jock. What's the French for 'café'?"

the principle (that is *actio personalis moritur cum persona*) was inflexibly applied. That this was so, whatever the damage may have been, was recognised as clear in Peek v. Gurney. The principles applied even to an action of trover—Hambly v. Trott (1, Cowp., 371), and to a claim for damages for fraud which induced the claimant to purchase shares which turned out to be valueless (In re Duncan, 1899), (1, Chancery, 378). There was an apparent, not a real, exception to this rule, in the case of a tort-feasor, whose estate had gained a benefit by the tort," etc., etc.

* * *

The True Character of the Careful Lover from Swansea.

In this way Mr. Justice Lush satisfied himself that he had done his duty, and contrived to smash the lady's claim to her £350 damages. But what Mr. Justice Lush did not contrive to do was to hide the real character of Sir Griffith Thomas's late brother from his little world at Swansea. And what is plain is that Arthur William Thomas, worth £49,000, was a virtuous Nonconformist down in Wales, but a rake and a gambler in town, who took respectable girls to brothels, gave them engagement rings to secure his low designs, and left them on the mat, and made his mother an excuse for not fulfilling his obligations.

* * *

Changed Her Religion for the Man She Loved.

The lady in the case even changed her religion for the man she loved (she had been a Roman Catholic), and if she had had a plain gold band on her finger she would have been entitled to £49,000 on Arthur Thomas's death. But, not having the "plain gold band," she gets not a penny, in spite of her engagement ring, her lost business, and her ruined life. I always *did* hate to see a judge's son take a seat on the Bench. Long before he gets there all human tenderness and pity has evaporated from his soul. Mr. Justice Lush is a remarkable case in point.

* * *

More Funny Thomases from Glamorgan.

But these Glamorganshire Thomases are the queerest lot of people you could possibly come across. Sir Griffith Thomas (who got all his late brother's £49,000) was High Sheriff of Glamorganshire, and is a Swansea coal magnate and ex-Mayor. Then there was the late Sir Alfred Thomas, who made a fortune by importing bananas. He was Mayor of Cardiff, Chairman of the Welsh Parliamentary Committee, and M.P. for East Glamorgan. When Rufus Isaacs writes his reminiscences, there will be some funny things about these Glamorgan Thomases. Sir Alfred had a brother who was completely obsessed with the idea that Sir Alfred controlled all his actions asleep and awake, by mesmeric influence.

He publicly accused Sir Alfred of not getting him the job of "ventilating expert" at the House of Commons when the ventilation of that chamber was under discussion. According to this brother, Sir Alfred Thomas was the biggest rogue and vagabond unhung, and a "cowardly sorcerer" into the bargain. The brother, of course, had eventually to be clapped into Barnwood Asylum, and when he came out took care to go back so as to be protected from his brother's "mesmeric influence"! At least, that was *his* idea. Funny lot, these Glamorgan Thomases!

* * *

A Bitter Pill for Kaiser Bill.

The Kaiser went in person to see the Russians cleared out of East Prussia. That was natural enough, seeing that East Prussia was the cradle of the Hohenzollerns, and to have Russians permanently on that terrain must have been a source of intense chagrin to the War Lord and his kith and kin. The Germans have had to stick the Russians "in possession" of a hundred miles of Prussian territory for six months, and now his Imperial Majesty has to admit that his beautiful Masurenland is ruined, the Russians having destroyed almost the last house and the last barn.

* * *

"He Never Saw East Prussia Again!"

However, it must have been a real source of joy to the Kaiser to have been able to write to the Governor of Koenigsberg, "Russians completely beaten. Our beloved East Prussia free from the enemy." During the Seven Years' War, Frederick the Great had to submit to the Russians entering and dominating East Prussia, and when the Tsarina Elizabeth was crowned there, he swore that he would never set foot in East Prussia again. And, though he eventually restored the province to Prussia, he kept his word. Koenigsberg never saw Frederick again!

Wales and the Welsh Guards.

It is so seldom in this world that the right man gets credit for something well done that I was glad to see Lord Dynevor writing to the papers to point out that the idea of the Welsh Guards was not due to the gallant officers who are associated with the inception of the regiment, but to Captain Philipps, of Picton Castle, Haverfordwest. It is important to realise that, however flabby the Welsh may be in the matter of military spirit, there are some sterling Welsh folk who have thought of their country's honour in times of peace as well as of the things that don't matter—Church v. Chapel, to wit.

* * *

"Amongst the Bloods!"

And the Philippses of Picton are a family of which Wales may be proud. One of them has been elevated by the present Radical Government to be Lord St. Davids, and he is almost the only member of the new Radical nobility whose place in Society is amongst the "bloods"! These Philippses are a very remarkable family. They enjoy an almost unrivalled antiquity in South Wales, and have always been a martial breed since the time of Richard of the Lion Heart, when they went with him on the Crusades.

* * *

"Philipps of Picton."

However, as "Captain Philipps of Picton Castle" doesn't happen to be a Philipps at all, save through his mother, but a Fisher, I am not referring to him, except that he was the inventor of the Welsh Guards. His mother's family, however, are good enough for my story. Nearly three hundred years ago these Philippses were erected into baronets, and Lord St. Davids' father was the twelfth and last of them, the title now being merged in the St. Davids' barony. Lord St. Davids and his two brothers, Sir Owen Philipps, K.C.M.G., and Sir Ivor Philipps, used to be one of the features of the House of Commons, where they all sat at the same time, the three of them being respectively 6ft. 3in., 6ft. 7in., and 6ft. 4in. Their father was one of our parson-baronets, a man than whom there was none more sincere in his religion in all Wales, who, despite his wealth and rank, occupied all his life (and it lasted 88 years) in promoting missionary enterprises abroad.

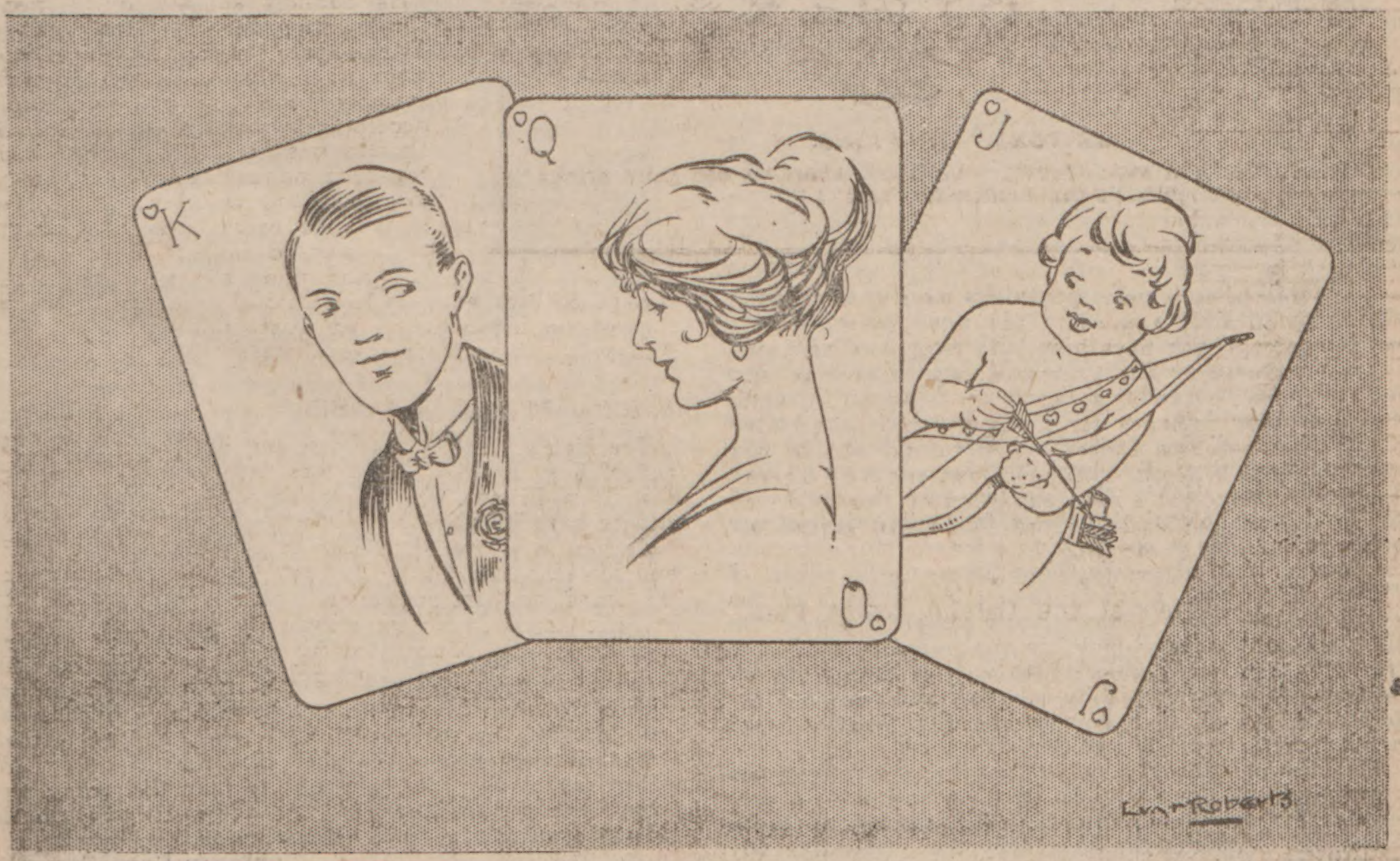
* * *

The Desire for Honorific Glory.

For over forty years the Rev. Sir Erasmus Philipps was a Canon of Salisbury Cathedral, and his huge sons were, of course, brought up in that most respectable Close, while the historic roof-tree of the family, Picton Castle by Haverfordwest, passed to a lady who was descended from the first Picton baronet three hundred years ago, and who married a Mr. Fisher of Huddersfield, who was created first Baronet of Picton of a new creation in 1887. Captain Philipps, the originator of the new Welsh Guards, is Mr. Fisher's son. The Philippses at Salisbury, who are "baronets of Picton, 1621," must have felt their lips curl when Mr. Fisher transformed himself into "Sir Charles Philipps, Baronet of Picton," in 1887. But the desire for honorific glory does get the better of some folk's good sense. Lord Aberdeen's, for example.

NOTICE.

The Editor will be pleased to consider short stories, 750 to 2,000 words, and humorous topical "skits" not exceeding 1,000 words. Payment at usual rates.



HEARTS ARE TRUMPS.

LIVELY LITTLE LEADERS.

People Who Ought to be Shot.

Dr. Inge, the Dean of St. Paul's, with that wonderful love of outspoken truth that seems to show that he ought to have been a critical journalist, and not a parson, made a very striking remark the other day. He has made not a few striking remarks during his reign at St. Paul's, and at one period of his career I used to pick up my morning paper in fear and trepidation lest the burial-place of heroes should have suddenly fallen down with shock. But the particular remark to which I want to refer now is Dr. Inge's startling pronouncement in a recent sermon to the effect that the misguided men and women who are strenuously engaged at the present time in opposing the inoculation against typhoid of the soldiers should, as the good Dean expresses it, "be lined up and shot."

Now, I call that a very fine and large saying to come from a parson. Parsons, you know, with some exceptions, are gentlemen who (and especially in time of war) love to attempt the impossible game of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. In other words, they like to be all things to all men, which means, in plain language, to be no darned thing at all except something like a weak, back-boneless mouse. In time of war, as I have said, they are especially like that, possibly because as a class they are mentally incapable of grasping the salient points of any big case or cause, but largely because the very foundations of their bread-and-butter get into a slippery state, and the good parsons do not know what to do to keep their feet.

It is all the more pleasing, therefore, to find at any rate one eminent member of the Church of England getting up on his shanks and telling the public a good, old-fashioned, homely truth. For it is the truth, and nothing but the truth, that the crazy cranks called anti-vaccinators and anti-inoculators, and anti-everything-under-the-sun, who, by trying to persuade soldiers to refuse to be inoculated, are laying the seeds of terrible disease in the trenches and out of them, should be lined up and shot without further ceremony. It is the best way to deal with such fools and faddists in time of war, and I take off my chapeau to the plucky Dean who has advocated such a sensible, if impossible, course from the pulpit of St. Paul's. We have got quite enough to do, in all conscience, to finish this war triumphantly and quickly. And of all the sickening spectacles that we have seen since war was declared, in connection with the efforts of the wretched sentimentalists and anti-everythings who want to have their clammy fingers in every pie, none has been more revolting than the effort of blithering humbugs and ignoramuses and self-advertisers to sweep aside at one fell swoop the wonderful achievements of modern science, and leave our boys to die in the trenches like rotten sheep of one of the most awful diseases that has ever ravaged humanity. Dr. Inge deserves a sort of civilian Victoria Cross, if his Majesty has any decoration of the kind lying around his palaces, for having the courage of his convictions in so startling a manner for a parson. So does another man—Sir Owen Seaman, the editor of *Punch*, who, after a whole page advertisement of the anti-inoculators had surreptitiously scraped its way into the great comic paper, publicly announced in the paper that *Punch* strongly objected to such a disgraceful advertisement appearing in its columns, and regretted the fact that it had, in a roundabout way, been inserted at the last moment before going to press.

But the anti-inoculators are not by a long way the only people who ought to be lined up and shot in connection with the war. Mr. Churchill announced in the House of Commons the other day that the Admiralty had had occasion to commission for military use as much as one-fifth of the whole of our vast mercantile marine. That gives one an idea of the enormous money made by shipowners out of the war. Yet, not content with the protection of the Government in every possible way, by means of good freights, insurance, and the British Navy, the shipowners have had the consummate impertinence to send up their freight charges for food for the United Kingdom to an alarming extent, and have thus, by increasing the cost of food to the whole of our people, damaged our vital interests almost as much as a corps of German soldiers. These shipowning sharks are another class of people to whom Dr. Inge might well, in his next sermon, apply the phrase that he has given to the anti-inoculators.

I read the other day of one of our wealthiest shipowners making this remark, "Yes, we are making money, we are going to make money, and we have a right to make money." Now, far be it from me to deny the strength and truth of this saying in ordinary times. It is a competitive world, and in the circumstances of modern society such a statement as the one that I have quoted is perhaps not unreasonable in times of peace. But I submit that in war-time the case is altogether different, the boot is on the other leg. I do not think that I am laying down anything in the nature of an unreasonable commercial morale when I say that at a time like this it is the duty of the rich to help the poor, and not to fleece them. It is not the right of either shipowners or anyone else to get unreasonably wealthy out of a war like this. For every sovereign they make by shark-like means is as damaging to the cause of their country as a German bullet. And do not let us forget that we are far from being out of the wood as regards the ultimate result of the tussle in which we are engaged. We require the help, and not the hindrance, of every commercial man in the country. And those who do not give it, but, like their predecessors in the South African War, prefer the plundering of the people to their simple duty, should also be lined up and shot when once they are discovered in their nefarious work.

Lastly, there are the men who are still hanging back and refusing to do their simple duty to their country in time of war. The Government statistics show that there are in the United Kingdom some four millions of unmarried men of military age—that is, between nineteen and thirty-eight. Where are they, may I ask, and what are they doing at this strenuous and dangerous time in their country's history? Large numbers of them are shirking, most damnably shirking—that is what they are doing. They are a disgrace to themselves, a disgrace to the fathers and mothers who bore them, and a disgrace to the country to which they profess to belong. They are renegades and traitors of the most despicable kind, in many instances. For many of them are wealthy sons of self-made men who have only one conception of duty, and that is to spend the money that their fathers made or stole for them. Such men as these, in my humble opinion, ought to be lined up and shot with as little ceremony as the other classes I have mentioned. The aristocracy are doing their duty. The working men are doing their duty. But these pitiable parasites to whom I refer, young men of commerce, with motors and horses and carriages and women and every luxury under the sun, are lolling at their ease while their country, for all they care, may go to hell. It is not, of course, that there is a very large number of them. But they are setting an awful example to the million or so young men who ought at the present moment to be offering their services to the country. I myself know two of these commercial young bloods who ought to be lined up and shot, strapping and idle young bucks, with many thousands a year left to them by their father. And it is the knowledge of them and their cowardice that makes me long for the day when the arm of compulsion shall grab the shirkers and the shufflers by the scruff of the neck, and teach them that, if they cannot be shot like the dogs they are, they can at any rate be forced to take their chance on the field of battle, and to do their little bit in the desperate work in which their country is engaged.

Jonathan Grub Streete.

Before returning to the front, the Kaiser visited the Berlin Zoo. Most probably to compare the camel's hump with his own.

WHO, WHY, WHEN AND WHERE.

LITTLE QUESTIONS FOR PROMINENT PEOPLE.

If the real reason for Sir Roger Casement's popularity with the Germans is that he can give them hints on "frightfulness," based on his Putumayo experiences?

* * *

If the Manchester Ship Canal dockers, who are demanding an extra shilling from their employers, will take the King's shilling, if the other shilling is refused?

* * *

Whether *two* lady dramatists as co-authors of one sketch for Arthur Bourchier isn't rather a tall order?

* * *

Whether anybody really wanted the new book about Bernard Shaw?

* * *

What does Mr. Algernon Ashton think of the *Referee's* correspondents on the subject of his correspondence?

* * *

Why is London's telephone system still so horribly disorganised, seeing that the "storm" excuse no longer holds good?

* * *

If the two Members for Portsmouth were fully justified in their unpatriotic onslaught upon Winston after his glorious speech?

* * *

Whether General Garibaldi's "cheery optimism" as to "Italy bound to join in soon" is justified by the vacillating facts?

* * *

Whether anybody wants to know that William Archer laughed at the revival of Bernard Shaw's old play "with a heartiness that almost re-called the Golden Ages before the war" (vide *Star*), and whether this sort of thing is criticism?

* * *

Whether there is any longer a leader-writer who hasn't quoted (or misquoted) Tennyson's "airy navies grappling in the central blue"?

* * *

Is it a fact that King George is expected back in the trenches during March?

* * *

Is it true thot King Albert of Belgium was seen in Bond Street one day last week?

* * *

Whether Mrs. Lloyd George knows who makes the clothes for the Welsh soldiers? And if it is a fact that in giving orders for military and charitable commodities, she stipulates that only a Welshman can receive such orders?

* * *

And is it a fact that the lady's orders having been given to the necessary Taffy, he at once takes them off to Moss's, of Houndsditch, where the clothes are made?

The Nut: "I say, have you been in an engagement yet?"
Tommy: "Not 'arf, I ain't."
The Nut: "Did it last long?"
Tommy: "Three months, and she touched me for thirty quid for breach."

Whether the Channel tunnel will be an accomplished fact shortly after the war?

* * *

Whether it is too late for us to wish Adelina Patti (aged seventy-two) and Sir Charles Santley (eighty-one on February 28th) many happy returns of their February birthdays?

* * *

What is the mysterious new method the Admiralty have devised for dealing with the German submarines? And has it not already had its effect?

* * *

If it is not quite time the old jape about the Swiss Navy was laid to rest, especially as Switzerland actually has a navy of sorts—in the shape of a revenue cutter or two plying on the large lakes?

* * *

If the gentleman who described his own face as "intelligent," and found it set down by an unknown official of the Foreign Office in a passport as "oval" proved the truth of his own estimate by writing to the *Times* to complain about it? And if it does not show a peculiar conception of matters of public interest that a leading newspaper can find room for this sort of nonsense?

* * *

If one or two important changes in the newspaper world are not pending?

* * *

If the public is not getting sick of the covert attacks upon Colonel (beg pardon, Brigadier-General) Seely, and if the attacks are quite a pleasant way of demonstrating that party feeling is dead?

* * *

If the Canadian officers at Salisbury Plain are altogether pleased with the conduct of their men? And if the Canadians ever will be sent across to the firing line?

* * *

Whether Lady Beauchamp is not suffering keen disappointment owing to a certain gentleman not keeping his promises?

* * *

Whether Sir Rennell Rodd is not having a terrible time in Rome, trying to keep the Italians from inviting a German invasion of Italy.

* * *

Will the Government make Sir A. Mond a Brigadier-General?

* * *

If it is true that the composer of the most popular song of the Victorian era is now an inmate of Rowton House?

TABLOID TOPICS.

Mr. Cecil Harmsworth, the new Under Secretary, should at question time be well up in his *Answers*.

* * *

"Colchester oyster trade is greatly depressed owing to the war." Yes, on the East Coast they go in for foreign shells, not natives.

* * *

A correspondent who saw a girl of fourteen smoking a cigarette in the Tube writes that he was absolutely flapperghasted.

* * *

There is an epidemic of spotted fever in Essex. If only some of the German spies could be spotted, nobody would complain.

* * *

"Bachelor," in the *Daily Mail*:—

Love is undoubtedly a foolish form of infatuation.

We suspect that "Bachelor" is really a married man.

* * *

A juryman excused himself from serving on the jury at the Old Bailey last week, on the ground that he was "a German by accident of birth." His apology was accepted.

* * *

"Wheat plentiful in America. No need for embargo." It is only in Germany that they have to make bread of potatoes and embargo and other curious substitutes for flour.

* * *

The Islington gravediggers are asking for increased wages, because of the extra cost of living. But what about the extra cost of dying, if this sort of thing is encouraged?

* * *

Sir Oliver Lodge suggests that Great Britain's watch-word should be "Never Again." Germany has for the past six months already adopted the phrase in this form: "Never a gain."

* * *

No, Edwin, the War Seals you have read about have nothing to do with the Lords of the Under-Sea. The All Highest confines his efforts in animal-training to "every dog and cat in the German Empire."

* * *

A man who bought some cheap cigars in the Strand was, it was stated in a recent High Court case, afterwards arrested as a lunatic wandering at large, and detained three days. We are not surprised.

* * *

The latest feminine "notion" is knee-bracelets made of ribbons in the colours of various regiments. The idea, presumably, is to encourage the favoured swains, whose regimental colours are selected, to pull up their socks.

* * *

"The upig, it is complained, is the greatest competitor of man" (*Pall Mall Gazette* reporting Dr. Paul Eltzbacher). The upig, we suppose, is the variety that inhabits undersea boats, but even at that the sentence is cryptic.

* * *

"Thursdays are becoming the weekly opportunity for bathering up the little oddments in a deisurely fashion," says the *Westminster Gazette* concerning Parliament. And a long-suffering public pays the wretched batherers £400 a year each for doing it.

* * *

The chairman of the Rubber Growers' Association says that if battleships are sheathed in rubber, shot will rebound from them "like the Australian boomerang." Well, we always thought the boomerang was a much over-rated missile, but we never knew it was claimed that shot rebounded from it.

PRIVATE MIDGELY'S PRISONER.

"Steady, men, steady!"

The voice of the young officer rang out clearly, as the long line of khaki-clad figures rocked, and almost broke its ranks, in its eagerness to get at the wavering mass of Germans and finish the job off neatly. Twitching hands gripped rifles—by the neck and a few inches above the magazine—and smoke-bleared eyes threw furtive glances towards the boyish form standing impassively on the rising ground behind.

Then the word was given, and with an exultant yell the Broadshires swept forward, an undulating row of glittering bayonets.

It was a glorious charge, and it achieved its purpose. The Germans to a man turned tail and ran—ran as the hare runs when the greyhound is hot upon its heels, twisting this way and that, any way and every way to escape from the dreaded stab of cold steel. And as they ran, many of them threw down their arms, even casting aside helmets and cartridge-belts in the mad terror of their flight. Others fell prone, hoping to deceive the pursuers into a belief that they were dead.

Private Sam Midgely—the Midge they called him in B Company—was in his element. A lean, rat-faced man, with narrow, red-rimmed eyes, carroty hair, a crooked nose, retracted upper lip, showing two protruding yellow fangs, and an almost entire absence of chin, he could not by any stretch of imagination be described as beautiful. But, unprepossessing as his appearance undoubtedly was, nobody could say a word against his keenness. It was hollow-ground, razor-edged, real Sheffield goods. He came from Sheffield, by the way. There was a legend to the effect that when he enlisted he got over the difficulty of an odd half-inch or so in height by standing on his dignity. Anyhow, he was the smallest man in the whole regiment, and incomparably the ugliest. He was also something of a favourite, having the Yorkshireman's generous, open nature, and a voice of surpassing sweetness. To hear him sing "It's a Long, Long Way to Tipperary" would, as Sergeant Briggs declared, "bring tears to the eyes of a boiled potato."

His one ambition since the war began had been to take a prisoner. This he was the more anxious to do because as yet he had no such achievement to his credit. He had shot a good many, and bayoneted not a few; but that was all in the ordinary course of things, so to speak, and went unnoticed in the day's work. To capture one, or possibly more, of the enemy single-handed was, he felt, a different matter.

Here was his chance unmistakably. He marked down a huge Prussian who had detached himself from the main rout, and was heading for a thick plantation on the right. After him went Private Midgely at top speed. Glancing backwards, the Prussian saw him coming, and redoubled his efforts to gain the shelter of the trees. But his weight and enormous bulk handicapped him sorely, and he had no chance against the active Yorkshireman, who was overhauling him rapidly.

Then suddenly he turned, and, whipping out a revolver, fired point blank. The bullet whistled close past Midgely's ear, bringing him to a dead stop. He levelled his rifle, and in another moment the Kaiser would have been one subject the less, had not the fellow flung down his weapon, and held up his hands in token of surrender.

Private Midgely advanced warily. He had heard of the Germans' cunning little ways, and had no mind to be caught in a trap. But, seeing the look of abject terror on the round, fleshy face, and perceiving that the man now really was unarmed, he planted himself in front of him squarely, carrying his rifle at the hip, with his finger ready on the trigger.

"Ah've gotten thee, lad," he said, with a broad grin.

The Prussian dropped his eyes sullenly, and muttered something in German, which, naturally enough, Private Midgely did not understand.

"'Appen you're right," said he. "Ah'm not argyin' t'point—as t'lass said to t'doctor when 'e telled 'er she oughten been married. Ah've summat else to do, sitha—and that's to taake you alyng o' me to wheer you'll be

The French cavalryman, like the British, is a true sportsman, and enjoys the fun as much as the horse.

well looked arter, and kep' out o' mischief till this scrap's over. So coom on. Get agaate, lad. Stir thisen!"

He stepped a couple of paces to one side, and motioned to the prisoner to proceed, which the latter did with a very bad grace, his captor falling in alongside, carrying his rifle across his arm. The revolver lay unheeded where it had fallen. Private Midgely was taking no risks.

By this time the rest of the chase was widely dispersed, and when the battalion re-formed, some three miles away, it was discovered that of all the men who had started in that glorious charge one only was missing—Private Midgely of B Company, to wit.

The name was called again, but there was no response. An uneasy movement passed through the ranks. The company-sergeants glanced at one another covertly. Lieutenant Crossland frowned, and tugged at the wisp of hair which adorned his upper lip. B Company, as a whole, felt that it had sustained a loss which was not solely represented by the reduction in its numerical strength.

When, therefore, towards the fall of dusk, there came stalking into the lines a gigantic Prussian, tenderly and lovingly convoyed by a perky little man in a private's uniform, one loud and prolonged roar of welcome burst from the throats of those who witnessed that edifying spectacle. The word went quickly round that the Midge had turned up, bringing a fair slice of the German army with him. It even reached the officers' quarters, occasioning no small excitement there. Lieutenant Crossland, returning from an inspection of outposts, found the Prussian standing in the midst of the corporal's guard which was about to lead him off to join the other prisoners taken that day.

"Bless my heart!" he exclaimed. "Whoever succeeded in capturing this Goliath?"

There was a shuffling and a nudging amongst the onlookers. Then Private Midgely stepped forward—or, more strictly speaking, was pushed forward—and came stiffly to the salute.

"*You!*" cried the Lieutenant, unable to conceal his astonishment, and still less his unfeigned delight at beholding the popular little man again. "Well I'm——" He gurgled inarticulately for a moment, and then concluded: "Very glad to see you safe and sound, Private Midgely; very glad indeed!"

"Thank you, sir," said Sam, grinning.

"You've not been idle, I perceive."

"Ah've made shift to do ma bit, sir."

"Um—a good bit, too."

Lieutenant Crossland smiled, and passed on his way. The ring of bystanders closed in upon Private Midgely.

"Tell us all about it, Sammy," said one. "Did t'beggar show fight?"

And Midgely, strong in the knowledge that his prisoner, who was standing moodily in the centre of the guard, did not understand a word he was saying, waxed eloquent over the details of the capture, not forgetting the bullet which had whistled so closely past his ear. He made a good deal of that bullet, having a fine dramatic instinct, and the true artistic sense of the born *raconteur*. He might have ventured to say that it *grazed* his ear, but that he had no mark to show for it. That was a pity, he felt. The merest scratch would have heightened the effect of the story tremendously.

But it was not in his nature to crow over the vanquished. Far otherwise, indeed; and to make amends for the liberties he had taken with the facts, he wound up by bestowing a genial smile on his late antagonist, to which the latter responded ungratefully with a stony stare. Nor did the Prussian show any more warmth of appreciation when, at some little inconvenience to himself, he paid him a visit in his quarters, to see that he was as comfortable as the circumstances would permit. A guttural exclamation, plainly not a benediction, was his only reward for this chivalrous act of attention.

Early next morning the prisoners were sent down to the base under a strong guard. To his intense satisfaction, Private Midgely was one of the number selected for this duty, and as chance would have it—or the sergeant in command—his place was alongside the burly captive of his bow and spear. The day was warm, and the road long and heavy with recent rain, so that even the best-conditioned felt limp and weary before the journey was ended. The big Prussian, flabby in spirit as well as in flesh, was soon in a pitiable plight. His square, fat face had lost its ruddy tint, drops of perspiration trickled down his pendulous cheeks, and his breath came in short, hard gasps from between his cracked and thirst-parched lips. Seeing which, Private Midgely detached his water-bottle, and surreptitiously passed it to him, with a friendly nod of commiseration.

The Prussian took it, and drank greedily. Then, as he returned it, a light of deep gratitude shone in his eyes, and for the first time he smiled.

"Gott segne dich, mein freund," he said.

And Private Midgely grinned, to show that he understood.

But he did not feel much like grinning when, on the following morning, he learned from one of the main-guard at the base, to whom the prisoners had been handed over, that six of them had contrived to make their escape during the night, and amongst them his unwieldy Prussian friend. How the thing had occurred exactly nobody could say; but it was supposed that in the temporary confusion produced by a stampede of cavalry remounts newly arrived from England, they had slipped past the sentries and made off under cover of the darkness.

At all events they were gone. That was the essential and soul-petrifying fact, so far as Private Midgely was concerned.

Beside it everything else dwindled into negligible obscurity.

. . . . . .

Three months had passed.

Corporal Midgely—for he had since been promoted to that rank—stood alone in the roadway, the last of the little band of Englishmen who had got separated from the main force, and on being attacked by a strong party of the enemy had elected to fight rather than surrender, although outnumbered by six to one.

They had made a good fight of it, too, so long as they were able; but the odds were heavy against them, and one by one they had fallen, until only the Midge remained. And his turn must come very soon, for he had run out of ammunition, and the bodies of his comrades lay some distance in front of him. So he stood there quietly, waiting for the end.

Then suddenly a harsh command rang out, and the firing ceased abruptly. A parley of some sort seemed to be going on in the enemy's ranks; there was much nodding of spiked helmets, and the sound of gruff laughter reached him. What it was all about he could not imagine, but from sundry glances thrown in his direction he guessed that the matter had to do with him.

Presently it would seem that a decision was arrived at. A tall, burly form detached itself from the group of blue-coated figures, and advanced slowly towards him with uplifted hand. For a moment he thought that his reeling brain had played him some trick. Then, with a gasp of amazement, he realised that it was indeed none other than the man he had taken prisoner after that glorious charge three months ago.

The Prussian halted in front of him, and solemnly elevated his right hand and elbow as if in the act of drinking. Then he tapped the astonished corporal on the chest, and pointing down the road, said:

"Go—all right."

And Corporal Midgely went.

. . . . . .

Afterwards, whenever he related the story to his friends, which he had occasion to do frequently, he invariably concluded by observing:

"Coom to think on't, t'chaap mun 'a bin a rare-plucked un to faace me like that, bould as brass, wi' nowt in 'is 'ands—and me 'avin' ma rifle, tha knaws. Ah cud 'a run 'im through wi' t'bay'nit as easy as owt."

But I, who know Corporal Midgely perhaps better than he knows himself, am strongly inclined to doubt the accuracy of the latter statement.

A. Demain Grange.

ROUGE AND RUFFLES.

The Call.

"Come out and see the spring," a poetic person said to me the other day. I looked out of the window and saw what I had expected to see—a vista of mud with a few dejected brown-branched trees, dripping away the remains of the morning rain. So not unnaturally I proposed postponing the expedition. But poets are persons not to be denied, especially in the spring, when their powers are at their zenith, so in the end I yielded, and tramped across Wimbledon Common, past that haughty and prosperous hamlet of Roehampton, where anybody lower in rank than a Duke is likely to be run in as a tramp, and so, as Pepys would have it, to the Robin Hood Inn, at Kingston. Most of the spring about seemed to attach itself to our boots as we walked along, but we saw some sycamore buds almost bursting with importance and pink, and there were bushes of gorse in full bloom, all prickly and yellow, just like the flirtations it is supposed to stand for. Kissing, you know, is always in season when the gorse is in bloom. And hundreds of birds were singing. The poetic person insisted he heard a lark, and kiddies were everywhere in perambulators from the smartest nurse-driven kind to the soap-box trundled by a cynical elder brother. Perhaps they had heard the spring call, too. They all seemed wonderfully contented, anyhow, from little Princess Splendid in her white fur coat to Cinderella in rags and what sounded like whooping-cough.

"REVUE" ORDER.

Two Million Runaways.

Having regard to the preponderance of women in the world at present I was quite pleased to read the other day, in a book by Professor Ross, that in New York there are two million more immigrant men than women. "A fine chance for the unattached female," I was murmuring already to myself, when I suddenly found that most of the two million men had left their women behind in the various countries they had forsaken. This doesn't say much for the happiness of modern marriage, does it? There must be something rotten in the state of matrimony when two million men migrate in order to get away from their wives, not to mention the millions who don't emigrate, but stay at home and put up with it. It isn't every man who has the courage to run away from a bad bargain. Well, I expect the marriage laws will be altered some day when all the various committees appointed to discuss them are safely tucked away in mossy graves and the free air of liberty blows through all the chinks and crannies of unnecessary convention. Until then I suppose matrimony will endure for a lifetime and joy for a morning.

* * *

Night Fungi.

Everything points to the fact that Lent is here—from the vast quantities of Lenten lilies nodding happy yellow heads from every street corner to the Lenten recipes in the cookery columns of the papers. But all the same, in spite of the war being here to give our consciences an extra spurt, we seem to be taking life pretty much as usual—more so even than a few months back. The theatres and the restaurants are doing excellent business, there are tango teas in Bond Street, and the night clubs are springing up among us again like mushrooms—night fungi, I have heard them called by the unco guid. Personally, I have always found all the night clubs I have ever been to singularly devoid of anything in the way of purple patches. They are dull enough to be patronised by Sunday-school teachers, and expensive enough to be the resort of millionaires and penniless people with Bohemian reputations. In fact, a night club at two a.m. reminds one of nothing more or less than a very badly-produced, gorgeously dressed revue of the cheaper sort, with teetotal drinks and morals to match. I defy anyone to break the last half of the Commandments on ginger-pop, even at seven-and-six a bottle. As a matter of fact, it's a frightfully difficult thing to be immoral nowadays unless you've got a good income and bad clothes.

* * *

Veils and the Woman.

A correspondent is anxious for me to tell her the origin of veils. I fancy that veils originated in the same way as did the mask of the French Queen Margot when she took her walks abroad—to protect the skin. Nowadays, of course, a veil so far from being a protection, is more in the nature of a revelation. Made from the most transparent gauze and net, it obscures the face only just so sufficiently as to give it an added attractiveness. As an object of use the veil has had its day, if you except the thick motoring ones; but as an object of allurement it more than holds its own. I can count on the fingers of my hand the women I meet who do not wear veils, but the numbers of women who do, from Duchesses to char-ladies, are uncountable. There isn't a woman living, I believe, scarcely two, I swear, who, on the eve of an elopement, wouldn't buy a yard of veiling. A veil seems an indispensable asset to the modern girl. "I shouldn't feel dressed without it," she has often confessed to me. Verily, the ways of women are beyond understanding, as even Solomon was constrained to admit, but I do not limit my lack of understanding her, as Solomon did, to her dealings with man, but rather to her dealings with everything and everybody, including herself.

Louise Heilgers.

BY THE WAY.

"The Mystery of Donnington Hall" sounds like the title of a novel by the late Miss Braddon. As a matter of fact, it is a subject that deeply engrosses anybody in these blest islands which the late J. Cæsar called Albion because their cliffs were not in his day entirely surrounded with pale-pink tape. Donington Hall, to be exact, is a place in Leicestershire where the late Mr. John Gretton, partner in a brewing firm known as Bass, Ratcliffe and Gretton, was wont to entertain huge parties of visitors. He was a huge man, with a huge beard, which always reminded one of W. G. Grace, and he had a huge voice, which started somewhere down in his spring-sided boots; and I am quite sure he would have used that voice to the full if he had lived to see to what use his magnificent mansion was being put. He left, when he died, about two million of money to his eldest son—now Unionist M.P. for Rutland—Donnington and a beggorly million to his second son, Fred, and a pittance of a quarter-million to his third son, Rupert, who is now a Tommy, "somewhere in France." What has induced Fred to allow the Government to fit up Donnington for Prussian officer-prisoners at a cost of £20,000 I really do *not* know. I have stayed at Donington myself, and I can assure the sceptical that you can be quite comfortable there without your host laying out an extra £20,000 on prison quarters. I speak as an English freeman, not as a Prussian prisoner.

* * *

Talking of brewers reminds me of Frank Alexander, the senior partner of the London and Burton Brewery, who died just recently. As he was a near relative of mine, I cannot repeat half the funny yarns of which he was the subject, and at least half of which, I truly believe, he originated himself. (He was at first in the Royal Navy, a service in which telling stories against yourself has been brought to a fine art.) Most of these stories concerned horse-racing and coursing, at both of which sports he achieved more than a little fame. (He owned a Derby favourite and won the Ascot Hunt Cup.) When the Licensing Act was yet a Licensing Bill all the brewers in the United Kingdom foresaw inevitable ruin staring them in the face. I was in India at the time the "bitter" (not "mild") wrangles over the "measure" were in progress, and Frank wrote to me: "My boy Guy has a commission in the Xth Hussars. If this Barabbas Act goes through, I shall get him exchanged into the Army Service Corps." The Licensing Act *did* go through—and Guy is now attached to his old regiment, and is at the front.

* * *

It makes the average Englishman writhe to hear of the way in which German prisoners in this country are pampered and the way in which English prisoners in Germany are slaved. The Minister in London of a neutral nation, rather indiscreetly—well, perhaps not indiscreetly, because he could not get out of the job without embroiling his own "relations"—arranged to receive and forward letters from an enemy alien now interned in a concentration camp. One of these read: "I am nearly dead with under-feeding and overwork. For heaven's sake send me some money. Then I can bribe the sentries to get me something." The Minister in question was a guileless soul—it is only in William Le Queux's novels that Ministers are not—and showed the letter to somebody who knew. Result, somebody who knew visited the camp and found our inventive young alien-guest living on the fat of the land and absolutely with more liberty than an heiress. He had that day complained because half-a-chicken he had been provided with for luncheon was, as he said, tough, and because the commandant of the camp had stopped his having more than £1 a day pocket-money.

* * *

Rather smart of Hilaire Belloc to let his extensive circle of rich friends understand that no pressmen would be admitted to the lecture on the war which he delivered last Monday at the big house in Belgravia. People anticipated something spicy and outspoken, and planked down their guineas like one o'clock. The fact that there was nothing in his lecture which could have raised a blush on the cheek of the most sensitive censor does not alter the fact that he had quite a number of shrewd things to say, and said them. Hilaire anticipates much jealousy between the Powers at the declaration of peace. He says that all France wants, and has wanted since 1871, is the dispersion of the Hohenzollerns; all England wants is the dispersion of the German fleet; and all Russia wants is—I forget what. What I never heard so well put before was Belloc's explanation of the feeling that for a generation has run through French artistic expression—the hate of the Prussian military bureaucracy. He says there is not a sentence in French literature or a note in French music that does not breathe mortification and revenge. Think it over.

* * *

When the Queen visited one of the workrooms run in con-

The Son and Heir: "Join the Army, father? Impossible. Besides, don't you know I've made up my mind to write for a living?"
The Father: "Um! You ought to do well. You've done nothing else ever since you went to Cambridge."

nection with her needlework guild at Hammersmith the other day, she talked to nearly every one of the workers. One was a woman "who had seen better days"—as a matter of fact, she had been married to a richish man who had run away, leaving her destitute, a disaster which had led to her entering a home of restraint for a time. "What were you doing before the war?" asked her Majesty kindly. "Madam," answered the poor woman, "I was a perverted wife!" *Sotto voce* inquiries led to the disclosure that she meant "deserted." Another woman, who remained seated at a sewing-machine during the Queen's visit, apologised with the remark: "I can't get up, Queen. I left my crutch on the balcony watching you arrive!"

* * *

Dr. Osmond Carr has been telling a *Globe* intervewer that, of he could only get anything approaching to a good libretto, he would give us an all-English musical piece that would knock spots off all the Viennese pieces that were ever heard—or words to that effect. I have been given an illuminating and, when all is said and done, convincing reason for the failure of English composers to compete with the foreign in the light music line. It is, says my authority—and he *is* an authority—certainly a musical matter, but a musical matter of a kind you might not think. I mean the music—ah, how sweet!—of money. Franz Lehar and the rest of the waltz kings earn pounds where they spend pence. Our English composers do exactly the reverse. When an Englishman has written a couple of successful two-bob ballads, he thinks he is Allah and Mohammed, Limited, Joint Stock. He is lionized and, instead of lying low and eating all the free meals which will assuredly be thrown down his throat, starts to give dinners at the Ritz. Result: If not bankruptcy, financial, and consequently mental, embarrassment.

* * *

I was interested to hear this view expounded by some body who knows—may I add, because he has "been through it"?—for it recalls an occasion some years ago when I visited a "star" composer in two rooms he was then occupying in Shepherd's Market. The lion was lying in bed—the best place for him, seeing, as nobody could fail to see, that his furniture had been removed. He told me that on the strength of three ballads that had made a hit, he had become a Society pet and had out-run the constable. Moreover, Messrs. Somebody had given him a contract to write twenty ballads a year at £1,000, and, until they were finished, he was short of a clean shirt. In such circumstances, can you be surprised that his later work was not up to the initial standard? I can't. Your French or German artist spends, or saves, what he earns, and anticipates nothing. *Voilà tout.*

* * *

Who'd like to go for a trip through a healthy country swarming with big game, and all expenses paid by the Government? That is the question which is propounded to those of adventurous spirit by Colonel Driscoll, D.S.O., whose scouts made a great name for themselves during the Boer War. Hitherto, in spite of his strenuous efforts to force upon the War Office the services of himself and some 5,000 members of the Legion of Frontiersmen, to go anywhere and do anything, Col. Driscoll has languished in the cold shades of neglect. Last Saturday, however, he received official permission to raise a battalion of 1,000 men, to be known as the "Frontiersmen's Battalion," for active service against the Kaiser's forces in Africa, and he has already been joined by such famous hunters and travellers as Frank Selous, Cherry Kearton and G. H. Outram.

He: "Curious looking girl, that Miss Smith!"
She: "Yes, but she has one comfort. Every time she looks in a mirror she forgets all the rest of her troubles."

* * *

This is what one of his old comrades, who will be at his side in this new venture, says about Colonel Driscoll: "The Colonel will get his 1,000 men all right; his name alone will be sufficient to bring in dozens of old comrades who, like myself, would not serve under any other leader. He is a born leader, too! Take the way he got to the front in the Boer War. He was a Captain in the Upper Burma Volunteers at the time, and, proceeding by himself to the front, he was attached by the late General Gatacre, who knew his worth, to the Frontier Mounted Rifles. This corps refused to fight out of Cape Colony, and so Captain Driscoll called for volunteers, and raised his own regiment, the famous Driscoll Scouts.

* * *

"He gained the D.S.O. for making a forced march with only fifteen men, and suddenly entering the town of Fouriesburg, in the Orange Free State. This feat released over 300 British officers and men who had been prisoners there. The enemy, finding they had been surprised by such a handful, returned in force, but Captain Driscoll armed the released soldiers with Mauser rifles and ammunition—left behind by the Boers—and drove off the enemy in headlong flight, headed by President Steyn in his shirt-sleeves.

THE LOITERER.

IN STAGELAND.

The *Era's* appeal on behalf of Miss Harriet Vernon should open the purse-strings—even in war-time—of a wide circle of old admirers and sympathisers. One of my earliest recollections of visits to London variety theatres is of Miss Vernon at her very best, when she was a winsome, refined, and superlatively attractive artist—not to speak of her pantomime triumphs, which were many and distinguished. Now she has fallen upon evil times, and I do hope that something substantial may accrue from our contemporary's appeal.

"Baby Mine"—the work of a woman dramatist, by the way—is a farce that seems to have lost little of its old-time ability to please. Weedon Grossmith's grotesque tragicality is a veritable "scream" in itself—he is, as he was on the first production of this mirthful medley, a delicious study in asinine bewilderment. He is supported, as of yore, by the roguish and bewitching Iris Hoey, while J. V. Bryant is excellent as the stolid but doting husband. Upon these three artists fall the burden and heat of a stimulating revival, but Constance Hyem and Agnes Glynne are also responsible for admirable work. "Baby Mine" should fill the Vaudeville for a long time to come.

"Go Ahead!" is the title of a revue in "eight incidents" which has been staged with some success at the Palladium. Of these "incidents," perhaps the Irish episode, in which the clock is supposed to go back for two thousand years, is the most effective and best stage-managed. Among the best of this revue's interpreters must be named Marie Tree, Marjorie Manners, Robert Reilly, and Frank Hemming. It is of interest to note that the veteran Chirgwin is back at the Palladium, as youthful and mirthful as ever.

My friend, Mr. Alfred Turner, Cyril Maude's manager, has received another most inspiring cable from his chief, still touring "Grumpy" in the Land of the Free. In the Quaker City he lately played this divertingly quaint comedy to nearly £1,000 in one day (two shows). Meanwhile, a tenant is wanted for the Playhouse. What offers?

"The Girl in the Taxi" has been transferred from the Garrick to the New, while at the Cri. a farce called "Seven Days" is being rehearsed. It is the joint work of Mary Rinehart and Avery Hopwood, its sub-title is "a comedy of terrors," and the fun turns upon the well-known American law whereby seven days' quarantine is imposed upon any domicile to which an infectious disease can be traced. Failing Jimmy Welch (indisposed), who "tried it on the dog" some time ago, the leading rôle in "Seven Days" is being undertaken by Lennox Pawle.

Speaking in general terms, and without desiring to labour the point, it really is astonishing what good business is being done in war-time and in Lent by many London theatres. It is true that prices of admission have generally been lowered, but this has been met by the artists accepting lower salaries. "Mistress Wilful," at the Strand, has failed to attract, but "Copperfield," "The Flag-Lieutenant," "Searchlights," "The Man who Stayed at Home," "Kings and Queens," and the revival of "Baby Mine" are among those pieces playing to very big houses indeed.

"Florodora" enjoyed a capital reception at the Lyric, with Leslie Stuart himself in the conductor's chair and his daughter in the cast. Perhaps the artistic success of the evening went to Miss Evie Greene, who sang and acted as charmingly as ever. But Miss Julia James also gained tornadoes of applause, as did Ben Nathan (the new Tweedlepunch, and a very competent successor to Willie Edouin in that immortal rôle), Scott Russell, and the Premier's namesake, G. H. Asquith. This revival greatly delighted the first-night audience.

THE UNDERSTUDY.

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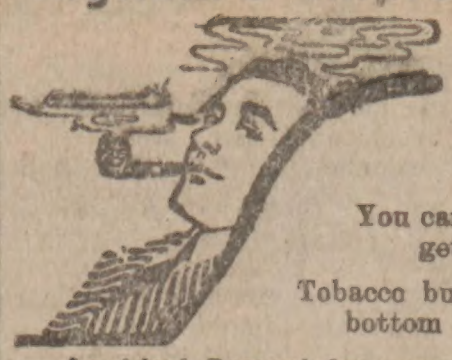

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